

### CLAIMS PENDING

What is claimed is:

Claims 1 to 76 (canceled)

77. (original) A method of stabilizing a hydroquinone composition having a pH of about 5.5 to about 8.0 comprising:

adding a cationic salt of acidic ascorbyl esters; and

adding an protected retinoid.

78. (previously amended) The method of claim 77 wherein the pH is about 5.5 to about 7.5.

79. (original) The method of claim 77 wherein the pH is about 6.0 to about 7.5.

80. (original) The method of claim 77 wherein the hydroquinone is present in about 1 to about 12 %.

81. (original) The method of claim 77 wherein the hydroquinone is present in about 2 to about 10%.

82. (original) The method of claim 77 wherein the hydroquinone is present in about 2 to about 8 %.

83. (original) The method of claim 77 wherein the hydroquinone is present in about 3 to about 4 %.

84. (original) The method of claim 77 wherein the hydroquinone is present in about 4 %.

85. (original) The method of claim 77 further comprising a water-soluble antioxidant.

86. (original) The method of claim 85 wherein the antioxidant comprises sulfite.

87. (original) The method of claim 86 wherein the antioxidant comprises sodium metabisulfite.

88. (original) The method of claim 87 wherein the sodium metabisulfite is present in at least about 0.05%.

89. (original) The method of claim 87 wherein the sodium metabisulfite is present at about 0.05% to about 0.5%.

90. (original) The method of claim 77 wherein the cationic salt comprises an inorganic salt.
91. (original) The method of claim 77 wherein the cationic salt comprises magnesium ascorbyl phosphate.
92. (original) The method of claim 91 wherein the magnesium ascorbyl phosphate is present in at least about 0.1%.
93. (original) The method of claim 91 wherein the magnesium ascorbyl phosphate is present at about 0.25 to about 3%.
94. (original) The method of claim 91 wherein the magnesium ascorbyl phosphate is present at about 0.25 to about 1%.
95. (original) The method of claim 85 wherein the antioxidant comprises sodium metabisulfite and the cationic salt comprises magnesium ascorbyl phosphate.
96. (original) The method of claim 95 wherein the sodium metabisulfite is present in at least about 0.05% and the magnesium ascorbyl phosphate is present in at least about 0.5%.
97. (original) The method of claim 77 wherein the cationic salt comprises an amino acyl derivative.
98. (original) The method of claim 97 wherein the cationic salt comprises aminopropyl ascorbyl phosphate.
99. (original) The method of claim 77 wherein the cationic salt comprises a sodium ascorbyl phosphate.
100. (original) The method of claim 77 wherein the protected retinoid is protected with a protective system.
101. (original) The method of claim 77 wherein the protected retinoid comprises at least one of the group consisting of retinoic acid, retinol, retinal, retinoid analogues, isotretinoin and its isomers.
102. (original) The method of claim 77 wherein the retinoid is present from about 0.01% to about 5.0%.
103. (original) The method of claim 77 wherein the retinoid is present from about 0.025% to about 2.0%.

104. (original) The method of claim 77 wherein the retinoid is present from about 0.05% to about 1.0%.
105. (original) The method of claim 77 wherein the retinoid is present from about 0.025% to about 0.5%.
106. (original) The process of making a stable hydroquinone composition having a pH of about 5.5 to about 8.0 comprising:

combining the following ingredients, in a carbon dioxide atmosphere:

first, magnesium ascorbyl phosphate and sodium metabisulfite, then

second, sodium metabisulfite, then

third, magnesium ascorbyl phosphate, then

fourth, hydroquinone; and

wherein said ingredients are contained in suitable dermatologically acceptable carriers.